

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We urge you and President Biden to speak out against the unilateral and illegal actions of the Republic of Turkey concerning the “reopening” of Varosha on Cyprus. We also ask that you and President Biden take actions to express the United States’ firm opposition to these plans, and to emphasize the need to resolve this matter in accordance with existing international agreements, not in a unilateral fashion that will only inflame tensions on Cyprus.

On October 6, 2020, the Republic of Turkey unilaterally announced that they would be reopening Varosha to tourists and moving to begin resettlement. This move was made without consideration of the Republic of Cyprus or the displaced former residents of Varosha, which has remained abandoned since the Republic of Turkey’s unlawful invasion in 1974. That the same military which pressured Varosha’s residents into leaving are now presuming to unilaterally dictate who can return without adhering to prior U.N. guidance is unacceptable.

These actions by the Republic of Turkey and its military are in direct violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 550, which “considers attempts to settle any part of Varosha by people other than its inhabitants as inadmissible.” Such actions actively violate the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus and undermine future efforts to resolve the ongoing situation in Cyprus.

We urge you to treat Cyprus as a foreign policy priority. We are committed to strengthening the United States’ alliance with Cyprus and supporting efforts in Congress to defend its stability and sovereignty. Preserving and strengthening our relations with Greece and Cyprus, and defending them from external threats, advances both the interests and values of the United States in the strategically critical Eastern Mediterranean.

We are disappointed by press reports that indicated President Biden did not raise the issue of Cyprus and a restart of talks to end this crisis when he met with Turkish President Erdogan at the G7 summit earlier this month. Resolving this issue through clear and progressing dialogue toward a bi-communal and bi-zonal federation is in the best interests of the United States and the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Republic of Turkey’s continuing unilateral actions on Cyprus makes a mockery of the rules-based international order that is crucial to maintaining global peace and prosperity, and which President Biden’s administration has consistently held up as vital to U.S. interests across the world.

We urge you and President Biden to demonstrate that Cyprus is a foreign policy priority for the administration by speaking out forcefully against these illegal actions by the Republic of Turkey against the people and Republic of Cyprus. Thank you for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

/s/
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

/s/
Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

/s/
Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress

/s/
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

/s/
Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

/s/
Michael Waltz
Member of Congress

/s/
John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

/s/
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/
Grace Meng
Member of Congress